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THE CLAIMS OF GREECE AT THE PEACE CONGRESS

By Theodore P. Ion, J.D., D.C.L.

Greece entered into the world conflict without laying down any conditions. She proclaimed that she was carrying on a war of liberation, and this requires that the claims of Hellenism should be examined in this light, to know whether these have really to do with countries inhabited by Greeks.

It is certain that the basin of the Eastern Mediterranean was both in ancient times and under the Byzantine Empire entirely Hellenic.

The Greek race (by an intricate network of influences), gained possession of the greater part of this basin and completely Hellenized it. Macedonia, Thrace, Asia Minor, including Pontus, were inhabited by peoples that were either Hellenes or completely Hellenized. A strong Greek national feeling existed in Smyrna, Egypt and Palestine where the Greek language had taken the first place, even crowding back the local languages.

The Greek Empire had to endure waves of invasion on all its frontiers. From the North, from the East, and the South the attacks came in succession. The last assault, made by that tribe which was the best organized militarily, destroyed the Empire.

The Turkish conqueror by massacres and by forced conversion to Mohammedanism, considerably reduced the number of the Greek population of these regions. A great part of them were, however, saved. The Turk, busied in waging war, needed people to work and support him. He therefore tolerated the Greek Christians who worked in order to enrich the Mussulmans.

The resistance of the race, and its faith in a happier future made it possible for it to endure its long martyrdom

and to maintain itself in this *inferno*. It was in vain that, as tradition goes, the Turks had the tongues of hundreds of thousands of Greeks cut out, in order to root out their language. It was in vain that the Greek boys, at an early age, were forcibly taken away from their families to make janissaries of them. The race showed an extraordinary vitality; it survived, and what is more, it ended by imposing its intellectual superiority upon the Turks.

Greece claims today the countries which formerly were Greek and which ethnologically justify this claim.

These countries are Thrace, Asia Minor and the Greek Islands.

THRACE

Taking as a basis the statistics of the Turkish Government of the year 1912, the ethnological composition of this province is as follows:

1. *Vilayet of Constantinople*

Turks.....	449,114
Greeks.....	364,459
Armenians.....	159,193
Bulgarians.....	4,331
Jews.....	46,521
Foreigners.....	149,825

2. *Vilayet of Adrianople*

Turks.....	508,363
Greeks.....	366,363
Armenians.....	24,060
Bulgarians.....	107,843
Jews.....	19,300

We have, then, 957,477 Turks, 730,822 Greeks and 112,174 Bulgarians.

In regard to education the number of schools and pupils is as follows:

1. *Vilayet of Constantinople*

Greek	
Schools.....	237
Teachers.....	832
Pupils.....	29,929
Bulgarian	
Schools.....	3
Teachers.....	15
Pupils.....	300

2. Vilayet of Adrianople

Greck	
Schools.....	416
Teachers.....	651
Pupils.....	32,369
Bulgarian	
Schools.....	123
Teachers.....	210
Pupils.....	6,881

We have, then, 653 Greek schools, 1483 teachers and 62,298 pupils as against 126 Bulgarian schools, 225 teachers and 7181 pupils.

Here we have the Turkish statistics as to the number and the intellectual activities of the various peoples of this province. The proportion of the Bulgarians to the Greeks is 1:7; the proportion of Bulgarian to Greek pupils is 1:9, and yet, the proposal has been made to give this province to Bulgaria. That is what some fanatics understand by the liberation of peoples.

The Bulgarians, more adroit than those who defend their claims, have discovered a new device, the system of "compensations." Greece, they say, should enlarge its territory by annexing parts of Asia Minor and the Islands, while they should acquire territorial compensation in Macedonia and Thrace.

If the Greek state is to be enlarged by territorial acquisitions in Asia Minor and the Islands, it is simply because the Greek element is there predominant. The old theory of the balance of power between states has been entirely discredited and abandoned. The Bulgarians and their supporters, therefore, can justify their claims only by proving that the populations of these provinces have a Bulgarian national consciousness.

The Bulgarians have in the past attempted, on the basis of statistics prepared by them, to show that all Macedonia and Thrace are inhabited by Bulgarians or at least that the great majority of their peoples are Bulgarians.

We shall prove by a Bulgarian propagandist that this affirmation is false. In a work which has just appeared at Lausanne, the author, Dr. N. Mikhoff, on the basis of the

observations made by P. Sergeant in a book which may be regarded as the exponent of Bulgarism, asserts that the total number of Bulgarians, the world over, is 5,500,000 souls. In 1910, before the Balkan Wars, the kingdom of Bulgaria had a population of 4,329,108. Granted that there were in foreign lands 250,000 Bulgarians (although in America and Australia, apart from the other countries in the world, the number of Bulgarian immigrants is very considerable), we obtain a total of 4,579,108 inhabitants. It needed therefore, only 920,892 to complete the 5,500,000 of which the Bulgarian race consisted, according to their well-known propagandist Dr. Mikhoff.

If we deduct from this number 279,684, which is the Bulgarian population of that part of Macedonia, annexed to Bulgaria in 1913, it will lack only 641,208 of satisfying the assertions of the Bulgarian propagandist.

The population of Thrace amounts to 2,000,000; that of the Greek and Serbian part of Macedonia, claimed by the Bulgarians, is about 1,500,000. So Bulgaria wishes to annex 3,500,000 people, while on the basis of the assertions of Dr. Mikhoff Bulgaria would only have needed 650,000 souls in order to have all the Bulgarians in the whole world free.

We have here the proof that Bulgaria, in demanding the annexations of Macedonia and Thrace, is really trying to subjugate populations whose national consciousness is by no means Bulgarian.

The proof that the populations of Macedonia and Thrace have not the Bulgarian national consciousness, a fact which is evidenced today by the popular manifestations of loyalty to Greece of a nature that it is unnecessary to recall, is found in the complaints of Professor Tsanoff, who, in his article which appeared in July, 1918 thunders against the Greek priests and teachers who are supposed to have altered the national consciousness of the Macedonians.

We find this proof, too, in the treatment meted out to the Greek and Serbian inhabitants of Macedonia by the Bulgarians, during the recent occupation of these regions by the Bulgarian army.

After their recent defeat by the Allied armies they evacu-

ated these regions and left behind them populations decimated by ill-treatment, starvation, exposure, deportation and massacre. Property had been destroyed, pillaged and burned, the people had been stripped of all their belongings. A delegation of the International Red Cross of Geneva, and certain officers of the Allied Armies in Macedonia who visited the country, described the situation as truly appalling.

The Germans acted in this way against the Belgian and French populations only because they were not German. The Bulgarians, by applying the same methods to the populations of Macedonia, showed that these peoples were strangers to them.

The only just solution of the question of Thrace, just, because based on historical and ethnological grounds, is its restoration to Hellenism, for to Hellenism it incontestably belongs.

ASIA MINOR

What is the Greek population of Asia Minor?

It is difficult to answer this question.

The Greeks represent it as being more than 2,000,000. Dr. Karl Dieterich, in a study which appeared at Leipzig in 1915, and which has recently been published in English by the American-Hellenic Society, estimates the population at more than a million.

The Greek estimate is probably nearer the truth, or, according to accurate school statistics, the Greeks of Asia Minor maintain 1444 schools for boys and 360 for girls, with 143,849 pupils and 46,916 pupils respectively.

If we take into account the fact that these schools have been established solely in important Greek centers, which are the only ones that can maintain them; that these schools are, with rare exceptions, elementary schools, attended by children from 7 to 14 years, one is forced to the conclusion that the population which furnishes 182,000 pupils must certainly surpass the estimate of the German writer,¹ who, by reason

¹ The number of the Greek pupils is in fact 280,000, for the girls who attend these schools are only 47,000 as against 143,844 boys. The girls in a given population are usually, numerically, almost equal to the boys, so that we must regard this number (280,000) as representing more accurately the number of Greek children in Asia Minor.

of the alliance of his country with Turkey, would naturally try to minimize the importance of the Greek element in order to do away with the claims of Greece on Asia Minor, upon which Germany had cast her eye.

Dr. Dieterich examines the Greek element from the point of view of its intellectual, economic and social strength. He demonstrates their influence in order to draw the conclusion that the Germans must reckon with this, for it is through coöperation with this element that the German expansion in Asia Minor can obtain certain and solid results. His essay is interesting, for it proves that science, commerce and industry, are in the hands of the Anatolian Greeks, and further that the Greeks of the country regions are most industrious agriculturists.

We might multiply statements of this sort, and give extracts from works dealing with the character of the Greeks of the west coast of Asia Minor, in the Vilayets of Broussa and Aïdin (Smyrna) and of the coast of the Black Sea.²

All this demonstrates the existence of a numerous, strong and industrious Greek element, concentrated chiefly in the western part of Asia Minor, and the Hellenic claims on Asia Minor are thus completely justified.

Various opinions have been advanced as to the fate of this country. Many are of the opinion that the Ottoman Empire should be preserved, only guaranteeing, for the future, an administration which will safeguard the beliefs and well-being of the populations that live there.

It is the fate of the Mussulmans, mingled with the Christians, which is advanced as an argument to justify the opinion of those who favor the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire.

Such a conception does not in the least correspond to the object aimed at, which is to settle finally the pending questions in such a way as to avoid in the future any causes for international conflicts. The subject nations have received formal assurances of freedom, and will be grievously disappointed if they do not receive this great boon, for the sake of which they have suffered for so many centuries.

² Compare, in the work above cited, the writer's preface to the study of Dr. Dieterich in which several quotations are given on this point.

The injustice which would thus be committed against the Christians of Asia Minor would be all the more glaring, for the same arguments have not prevented the recognition of the independence or the union of the peoples of Austria-Hungary to other sister states.

There, too, time and might have done their work. The populations have mingled; along with densely concentrated populations, the neighboring races have invaded the territories occupied by a given people; they have mingled with the natives, and a mixture in language and national policy has resulted. This is disregarded and rightly so. These intruders must accept the dictates of justice or must depart. For what reason or motive should the indigenous populations of Asia Minor be treated differently? For Greeks and Armenians have lived in Asia Minor from ancient times. The Mohammedan Turk or Kurd is a foreigner who has conquered and destroyed the Greek and Armenian civilization.

The vitality of these peoples has been shown by their resistance. During these long centuries of subjection, it was in vain that the conqueror used every means to Mohammedanize them, to destroy their language and their national consciousness.

They suffered all, they endured all, but they maintained their nationality, as such, and they preserved their national consciousness intact. By what right can they now be compelled to come once more under the domination, even though this shall have been modified for the better, of him who has tortured them for centuries? Is such a dwelling together possible? Some of the noblest souls think of it as being so. They make much of the fraternization of peoples, of forgiveness of wrong-doing; ideas that are all very fine, but under the given premises incapable of application. Those who advocated them have not had to suffer the long moral and material tortures that the Greeks and Armenians have had to endure. They have not had their sisters massacred, their daughters outraged and their property pillaged, and destroyed. With the Greeks, as with the Armenians, the hatred of the Turk is a very powerful feeling

and this sentiment has been recently intensified by the crimes that the Turks have committed in the process of exterminating these peoples, an extermination that has been marked by a cruelty that surpasses all imagination.

Besides, the Turks cannot change. Mussulman lands have only been able to enjoy law, order and prosperity when under Christian government. The lands along the northern coast of Africa have only enjoyed order and tranquillity when under foreign rule. Morocco, Algiers, Tunis and Egypt were in a chaotic state until the Christians from foreign lands brought order, and with order, prosperity to these lands.

But the Christian administration has been able to succeed in these countries because it administered peoples belonging to the same race, with the same tendencies and the same beliefs. The disorder that existed before the appearance of the foreign administration was all due to the arbitrariness of leaders who made war for the sake of rapine. By imposing a respect for order, the foreigner has restored tranquillity.

In Asia Minor, however, we have profound reasons for disagreement. The Greek and the Armenian are separated from the Turk by religion, by civilization, by differences in aims and ideals. These are peoples that are civilized, while the Turk still remains barbarous, fanatical and obstinately opposed to all progress, because his religion, utterly lacking elasticity, prevents him from assimilating new ideas. It will require great efforts, demanding an indefinitely long time, to inculcate the rules which form the basis of civilized society. The Hindoo and the Arab Mussulman belong to races with a great civilization behind them and influencing them. But the Turk has never had any culture or civilization. What elementary notions of organization he has, have been borrowed from the conquered races. He will, therefore, resist all reform that the civilized nations may endeavor to impose upon him. All similar attempts that have been made in the past have utterly failed for these very reasons. Can anyone maintain that the Armenian and Greek peoples of Asia Minor have drunk so lightly

from their cup of woe that they must still be exposed to the hateful recoil of the barbarous Turk?

Historically and ethnologically the Greek and Armenian spheres of influence are clearly defined. It is only necessary to free these territories and to leave to the Turks what remains of the country,—a vast expanse—as the regions where they may gather and live. These freed lands will draw to them the Greeks and Armenians and will form centers which will assure their free development. Exchanges in population will take place, partly by the natural law of attraction and partly by more formal agreements. Dense national agglomerations will thus be formed which will permit these peoples to give free scope to their national activity and to their individual civilizations. This re-partition will, moreover, permit an attempt to organize the territories that will be left to the Turks, without imposing upon the Greek and Armenian that promiscuous intermingling, which is so repugnant to them and which is bound to delay, if not totally to prevent, the establishment of order, which is absolutely necessary to all progress.

Such a settlement corresponds furthermore to the general and common weal. It is founded on the experience of the past, for it is by the total independence and the absolute separation of the Christians that progress has been made. The Balkan States form a striking example. As soon as a given Turkish territory obtained its complete liberation, the Mussulman populations, who could not bring themselves to submit to the new conditions of law and order, departed and the Christian element set to work at tasks in which, within very short periods of time, palpable progress was made. When one has before him the experience of the past, why should one wish to continue a system which has never resulted in anything but deception and disappointment? When have the efforts at reform in Turkey ever had any results? These lands have need of considerable amounts of capital in order to provide the means of development. This capital will never be forthcoming unless order is definitely established by a state of affairs that is certain and definitive, that excludes the element of chance.

This final settlement is made requisite, too, by the ambitious aims that have arisen with regard to these countries. Imperialistic covetousness, in spite of the principles proclaimed, has not yet been abandoned. Keeping the Sick Man alive, in order to try new experiments on him, will result in feeding these ambitions. They will make an effort by intrigues to produce a miscarriage of these reforms and new causes of conflict will be created. By a definite and final settlement which shall give to Greece what is historically and ethnologically Greek, and which shall create an Armenian State, these ambitions will disappear. The Turks will only have to become civilized and to raise themselves to the scale of their neighbors in order to assure the conservation of their independence, and to gain the respect of foreign peoples. This result would be greatly facilitated by the example that the Turks would have before their very eyes, for the results which will be obtained by the Greeks and Armenians cannot fail to have a good influence upon the better Turkish elements, who, realizing what they will gain by the establishment of a regular administration will work hard to secure for their country the machinery necessary for its development. The Greek and Armenian influence to which the Turks have learned in several centuries of experience to accommodate themselves, will be exerted more easily and naturally than any other, and will serve to make the Turks understand the necessity of a total abandonment of their present-day conceptions which form a shocking anachronism in this 20th century.

THE ISLANDS

The population of the islands occupied by the Italians is almost exclusively Greek, for the Greek element, numbering 143,000 souls, is offset by only 4500 Turks, resident in Rhodes and Cos and 2500 Jews, who are all settled in Rhodes. These Greeks of the islands have preserved, throughout the ages, more clearly than elsewhere, their Greek nature and character, for their little islands were so insignificant and the people so poor that they have remained

free from all foreign influence. In physique they call to mind the ideals of a Polyclitus or a Phidias.

The Italians hold them by virtue of the Treaty of Lausanne, in order thus to secure the execution of the clause which obliged Turkey to withdraw her troops from Tripoli. These troops have long since disappeared so that the reason which justified the Italian occupation no longer exists.

Italy, which has formally accepted the principles laid down by the United States, will surely respect the principle of nationality which requires the annexation of these islands to Greece.